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3 February 1950

MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD

SUBJECT: Interview with Colonel Johnson of the Joint Intelligence Group, The Joint Staff, concerning the Watch Committee Proposal

REFERENCE: Memorandum for the DCI from the DDI/GSUSA, dated 20 January 1950, Subject: Proposed Watch Committee

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1. On Wednesday, 1 February 1950, I interviewed Colonel Johnson of the Joint Intelligence Group, Joint Staff, concerning the Watch Committee proposal, mainly for the purpose of determining if any conflict would arise between the estimates which would be prepared by CIA under the proposal and those prepared within the organization pertaining to the Joint Chiefs of Staff. I discovered that Colonel Johnson had not received a copy of the reference memorandum, despite the statement in its paragraph 6. When I saw Colonel Hammond of ID/GSUSA later in the day, I told him Colonel Johnson would like to have a copy.

2. After reading the reference memorandum, Colonel Johnson stated he saw no chance of a conflict; in fact, those estimates which would be prepared by CIA under the proposal might turn out to be quite helpful to the JCS organization. He then imparted to me the information which I summarize below. I have added a few inferences of my own.

3. The Joint Staff prepares estimates for Joint Intelligence Committee approval on those subjects under consideration by the JCS, and those only. Before such estimates become final, they must be approved by the Joint Chiefs themselves, hence when they appear outside the JCS organization they really constitute policy statements of the JCS rather than intelligence documents per se. They get, therefore, very limited distribution -- in fact, nobody sees them unless he is entitled to receive JCS policy statements. It is obvious in this light that the JIC/JIG combination makes no attempt to function as a normal intelligence organization.

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4. The JIG has a very small staff, receives practically no raw information, and does no current day-to-day intelligence analysis or reporting. Consequently, when it is given the job of preparing an estimate, it does so merely by combining contributions from appropriate agencies. In almost all cases, contributions are obtained from the intelligence organizations of the Army, Navy, and Air Force. When political or economic considerations are involved, contributions are obtained from CIA with the understanding that the information furnished will have been coordinated with the State Department. Thus, if a particular estimate prepared by CIA in accordance with the proposal in the reference memorandum were appropriate and timely, the JIG would be saved the trouble of making a specific request upon CIA. Also, conceivably, if the estimate were to contain fully integrated military intelligence, the JIG would be saved much of the trouble of combining contributions, and would need only to modify the paper to conform to the immediate requirement, perhaps adding some military detail.

*to make it
conform to
Pentagon
policy?*

5. Concerning the military capabilities of our most likely enemy, the JIG strives to maintain three estimates differing from each other in their degree of projection into the future. These estimates are related either to approved JCS plans or to planning activity currently taking place within the JCS organization. They are identified as (1) a short-range estimate, (2) a mid-range estimate, and (3) a long-range estimate. All these estimates are in a sense after the fact, since they are prepared concurrently with the related planning activity. If I understood correctly, the decisions as to the various target dates for the separate plans are made somewhat arbitrarily, and there is apparently no effort to assess the global situation from time to time to keep planning activity abreast of it. In view of these circumstances, it is probable that periodic CIA estimates with various degrees of projection into the future might prove very helpful to the JCS organization in keeping planning activities in tune with the global situation. No JCS estimate in existence at the time of the publication of a CIA estimate would conflict with the latter, because the CIA estimate would take precedence and would indicate the need for redirection of JCS planning activities.

6. The JIG also maintains estimates to accompany the emergency plans to meet the contingency that war might come during the current fiscal year. The remarks made above concerning CIA estimates apply in this case as well.

7. Besides the estimates described above, the JIG prepares estimates for particular current problems, under consideration by the JCS. Since these are intimately related to JCS business, there is little

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chance that they could come into conflict with the broad estimates which would be prepared by CIA under the Army proposal. In any event, it appears that the CIA estimate would take precedence in any particular case.

8. In talking to Colonel Johnson, I raised no issues concerning other phases of the Watch Committee proposal. With reference to the phase discussed, it was clear that Colonel Johnson had no objection to the estimates which would be prepared by CIA under the proposal, but rather felt that they would be quite helpful to the JCS organization.



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